

Norwich Planning Commission
Regular Meeting – August 12th, 2025 6:30pm

Members Present: Jaan Laaspere, Mary Gorman, Ernie Ciccotelli, Bob Pape, Christian Spalding

Not Present: Vincent Crow, Jeff Goodrich

Zoning Administrator: Steven True

Public Present: Linda Gray, Mary Albert, Jeff Lubell, Kathleen Shepard, Richard Gere

Meeting Opened: 6:31 pm

1. Open meeting; quorum met

2. Approve Agenda

Gorman moved, seconded by Spalding, to approve the agenda.

Motion passed 5-0

3. Correspondence

Steven True introduced a letter from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development announcing the FY26 Municipal Planning Grant. The Chair accepted the communication into the record with consensus from the board.

4. Comment from the Public on items not on the agenda:

None

5. Review feedback from TRORC regarding Future Land Use maps/Housing Targets

- Jaan Laaspere spoke to his meeting with Peter Gregory and Kevin Gieger of Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Planning Commission (TRORC). At the next regular meeting, September 9th, 2025, TRORC will present a draft of the Future Land Use map to the Commission and interested parties.
- Laaspere directed members to TRORC's Future Land Use FAQ as posted on the TRORC website.
- True discussed his meeting with Kyle Hanson and Kyle Katz of TRORC. True remarked that the Regional Plan containing the Future Land Use map is set for adoption at the end of 2026, becoming effective in 2027. True noted that a Future Land Use map is commonly included in a Regional Plan. (See 24 V.S.A. § 4348a(12))
- Members discussed land use categories, the new State designations (Neighborhoods and Centers), the new Act 250 exemptions (Tier1a, Tier1b, Tier 2 & 3) and how they apply to the Future Land Use land use categories and classifications.
- Members discussed how the future land affect new housing targets set under the upcoming regional plan.
- Jaan Laaspere reiterated that any proposed development in the Town must pass through local zoning regulations.
- Jaan Laaspere anticipating a Special Meeting in September asked members to come up with availability later in the month.

6. Review of Affordable Housing Subcommittee Charge

- Members discussed and compared the AHSC charge as written by Jeff Lubell and the version contained in the current draft of the Selectboard handbook
- Consensus was reached to proceed with the Selectboard version, revised as follows:
 - Under the umbrella of the Planning Commission's statutory duties, it is the charge of the Affordable Housing Subcommittee to provide recommendations and guidance to, and work with, the Planning Commission, Town Planner, Selectboard, and Town Manager on issues related to affordable housing in Norwich*
- Mary Gorman makes a **MOTION** to approve as revised, seconded by Bob Pape. Motion carried unanimously (5-0)

7. Review of Solar Siting Subcommittee Charge and discussion of an Enhanced Energy Plan

- Mary Gorman gave a background statement reiterating discussions had at the most recent solar siting committee meeting and provided context for the Charge.
- Members discussed the charge and its contents providing feedback.
- Members of board and members of the public in attendance discussed input into Enhanced Energy Plan (EEP).
- After this discussion, Mary Gorman makes a **MOTION** to dissolve the Solar-Siting Subcommittee. Ernie Ciccotelli seconds. The board discusses the motion. **MOTION** fails to carry (0-5).
- Consensus was reached to proceed with the following charge:
- This committee will work to:
 - Ensure that the Town Plan provides clear, accurate guidance regarding the development of solar energy projects in the Town of Norwich. Guided by the laws of the State of Vermont, bearing in mind the town's character, topography, location of critical utilities, and desires of all of its residents, the Solar Siting Committee will define in the Town Plan clear criteria for any solar project requiring Public Utility Commission (Section 248 Process) review.*
 - The Solar Siting Committee will engage with other town groups such as the Energy Committee, the Conservation Committee, and will continue to welcome input during its meetings to hear feedback from members of the public.*
 - The Solar Siting Committee will provide input to the efforts of the Planning Commission to develop an Enhanced Energy Plan for the Town of Norwich.*
- Bob Page **MOTIONS** to accept the charge as written. Ernie Ciccotelli seconds. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

8. Discuss Capital Planning Work Plans and Assignments

- Jaan Laaspere discusses his correspondence addressed to the Selectboard and his plan to discuss the Planning Commission intention to develop a Capital Planning element during public comment at the September 13th regular Select board meeting.
- Christian Spalding and Bob Pape volunteer to lead this effort within the planning commission.

9. Approve minutes from June 10th, 2025, July 8th, 2025

- Bob Page makes a **MOTION** to approve the June 10th Minutes, Ernie Ciccotelle seconds, All in Favor, Mary Gorman abstains.

- Insufficient quorum to pass July 8th, 2025, minutes, action postponed until next regular meeting.

10. Adjourn

Bob Pape moved, seconded by Mary Gorman, to adjourn the meeting at 8:36pm.

Motion passed 5-0